

TRANSLATION OF INTERVIEW WITH MANUEL ARTIME  
CONDUCTED BY HAYNES JOHNSON, JUNE 11, 1963, MIAMI, FLORIDA

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(Note: This is the exact, word-for-word translation. Nothing has been left out. Where dots . . . appear they are for pauses or punctuation. This section of the interview began with Johnson asking Artime if "Frank", the American in charge of Brigade 2506's training in Guatemala, had spoken with Artime about plans for the invasion, when it might come and if there was any opposition to it. Johnson said this was a very important point. The transcript follows.)

ARTIME--Yes, actually this is a very intimate business, as a matter of fact its publishing shouldn't . . . I mean, we should think about the prestige of the . . . Just Pepe and I knew the general scheme of the invasion. The general scheme only, but not the details. For example, we knew about our Air Force superiority; and that Castro would not have the opportunity to mobilize his Air Force in land. But the day before our mobilization, Frank called me to tell me the following:

(JOHNSON--Manolo, try to recall exactly what was said. This is extremely important.)

ARTIME--The day before the mobilization to Nicaragua, Frank called me to his headquarters and told me something that made me worried, extremely worried. I only discussed this with Pepe San Roman. He told me the following: "Manolo, there are some forces opposed to the culmination of our plans. The underground is already in the difficult labor of sabotage, the guerrillas are in an offensive position.

Approved For Release 2001/07/26 : CIA-RDP75-00149R000100160051-1

Only this last blow, the invasion, is needed. There is going to be your landing, another small landing of diversionary forces, and a threat of a landing in Pinar del Rio. But there are forces being mobilized to prevent this invasion. These forces come from certain departments of the administration and do not want the invasion to go. It is possible that if something happens, I might receive an actual and very special order. And I am going to receive it in the following manner."

(JOHNSON--WHO DID THE TRANSLATION?)

ARTIME--An American.

(JOHNSON--WHO WAS HE?)

ARTIME--I don't remember. Then he continued, "If I receive an order to stop this, I have other concrete orders to obey and they are the following: to go through with the invasion at any cost. These orders are from my superiors who are in complete agreement with the United States Government. You and Pepe can post two Cuban soldiers at my door, as if I was your prisoner and then the mobilization can go through to Nicaragua anyway. The rest of the instructors do not have to know anything about this whole business. Besides, I will continue to give orders to them as usual. This is only to cover the appearance that I am your prisoner. Then, you will go to Nicaragua and there you will receive the general instructions. You will go ahead with the invasion and once you are in the high seas, you will ask us as a favor to help you at any cost. And then we will act as a mother who cannot abandon her children in distress."

(JOHNSON--DID FRANK SAY THAT YOU WERE TO CUT COMMUNICATIONS WITH THE OUTSIDE SO THAT THEY COULDN'T SEND MESSAGES BACK IN?)

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ARTIME--Yes, that was one of the things he told us--to cut communications from outside. But I want to make it clear that this was just a planning statement that he made, because this never happened. Then he said that the Cubans agreed with this. Besides, I just had received a cable from Miro which said: "Everything is fine, go ahead, good luck."

(JOHNSON--WHEN HE SAID THAT THERE ARE FORCES WITHIN THE ADMINISTRATION, DOES HE GIVE ANY NAMES? WHAT KIND OF OPPOSITION MIGHT THERE BE? WHO MIGHT WANT TO TRY TO STOP IT AND WHY? DOES HE EXPLAIN THIS AT ALL?)

ARTIME--He didn't give any names, to me he didn't give any. I mean, I want to make it clear that this never became a reality. And when we were in Nicaragua receiving the instructions and the briefing, he again, made some kind of insinuation to this extent.

(JOHNSON--WHO KNEW ABOUT THIS?)

ARTIME--Only Pepe and I knew about this. I don't know if Oliva knew about it. Yes, I think Pepe talked it over with Oliva. Yes, Oliva knew it, Oliva knew it.

(JOHNSON--WAS THIS SAID PRIVATELY TO YOU?)

ARTIME--Yes, privately. But at the end he mentioned something to Pepe who later discussed it with me. And this was that if we receive any message which says, "everything is fine", to turn back. And if we receive a message which says, "the quetzal is in the branch", to go ahead. This was said only to Pepe, at the very end, while at the pier. And he did not mention this theme again to us. Of course, we didn't have any need to institute this. As a matter of fact, when we were in Nicaragua

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I asked him, "How about what you told me?" and he answered, "there is no need for that because we have the orders to go through with the invasion."